

# Jefferson Takes Office

## MAIN IDEA

When Jefferson became president in 1801, his party replaced Federalist programs with its own.

## WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Today's Democratic Party traces its roots to the party of Jefferson, the Democratic-Republicans.

## TERMS & NAMES

radical  
Judiciary Act  
of 1801  
John Marshall

*Marbury v. Madison*  
unconstitutional  
judicial review

## ONE AMERICAN'S STORY

In the election of 1800, backers of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson fought for their candidates with nasty personal attacks. For instance, James Callender warned voters not to reelect President John Adams.

### A VOICE FROM THE PAST

In the fall of 1796 . . . the country fell into a more dangerous juncture than almost any the old confederation ever endured. The tardiness and timidity of Mr. Washington were succeeded by the rancour [bitterness] and insolence [arrogance] of Mr. Adams. . . . Think what you have been, what you are, and what, under [Adams], you are likely to become.

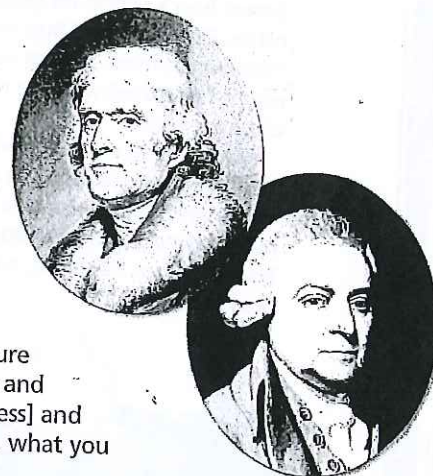
James Callender, quoted in *American Aurora*

Adams's defenders were just as vicious. Yet, in spite of the campaign's nastiness, the election ended with a peaceful transfer of power from one party to another. The 1800 election was a contest between two parties with different ideas about the role of government.

## The Election of 1800

The two parties contesting the election of 1800 were the Federalists, led by President John Adams, and the Democratic-Republicans, represented by Thomas Jefferson. Each party believed that the other was endangering the Constitution and the American republic.

The Democratic-Republicans thought they were saving the nation from monarchy and oppression. They argued, again and again, that the Alien and Sedition Acts supported by the Federalists violated the Bill of Rights. (See pages 306–307.) The Federalists thought that the nation was about to be ruined by **radicals**—people who take extreme political positions. They remembered the violence of the French Revolution, in which radicals executed thousands in the name of liberty.



In the presidential election of 1800, Thomas Jefferson was the candidate of the Democratic-Republican Party. John Adams represented the Federalists.

### Taking Notes

Use your chart to take notes about Jefferson's presidency.

The Jefferson Era	
Summaries	
Main Idea:	
Details:	
Main Idea:	
Details:	
Main Idea:	
Details:	



When election day came, the Democratic-Republicans won the presidency. Jefferson received 73 votes in the electoral college, and Adams earned 65. But there was a problem. Aaron Burr, whom the Democratic-Republicans wanted as vice president, also received 73 votes.

**Background**  
In 1804, the Twelfth Amendment solved this problem by creating separate ballots for president and vice president.

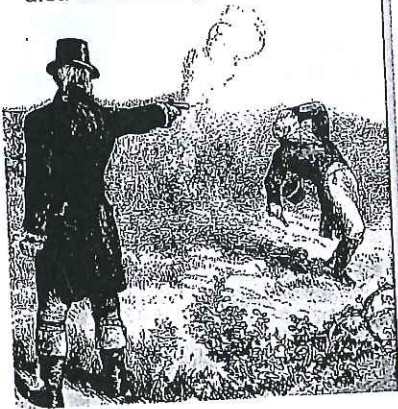
## STRANGE but True

### HAMILTON-BURR DUEL

In 1804, the Democratic-Republicans replaced Aaron Burr as their candidate for vice president. Burr then decided to run for governor of New York.

Alexander Hamilton questioned Burr's fitness for public office. He wrote that Burr was a "dangerous man . . . who ought not to be trusted with the reins of government."

Burr lost the election. Furious, he challenged Hamilton to a duel. Hamilton went to the duel but resolved not to fire. Burr, however, shot Hamilton, who died the next day.



## Breaking the Tie

According to the Constitution, the House of Representatives had to choose between Burr and Jefferson. The Democratic-Republicans clearly intended for Jefferson to be president. However, the new House of Representatives, dominated by Jefferson's party, would not take office for some months. Federalists still held a majority in the House, and their votes would decide the winner.

The Federalists were divided. Some feared Jefferson so much that they decided to back Burr. Others, such as Alexander Hamilton, considered Burr an unreliable man and urged the election of Jefferson. Hamilton did not like Jefferson, but he believed that Jefferson would do more for the good of the nation than Burr. "If there be a man in the world I ought to hate," he said, "it is Jefferson. . . . But the public good must be [more important than] every private consideration."

Over a period of seven days, the House voted 35 times without determining a winner. Finally, two weeks before the inauguration, Alexander Hamilton's friend James A. Bayard persuaded several Federalists not to vote for Burr. On the thirty-sixth ballot, Jefferson was elected president. Aaron Burr, who became vice president, would never forget Hamilton's insults.

People were overjoyed by Jefferson's election. A Philadelphia newspaper reported that bells rang, guns fired, dogs barked, cats meowed, and children cried over the news of Jefferson's victory.

### Reading History

**A. Analyzing Points of View**  
Why did Hamilton think that Jefferson was the better choice for president?

## The Talented Jefferson

In over 200 years, the United States has had more than 40 presidents. Many of them were great leaders. But no president has ever matched Thomas Jefferson in the variety of his achievements.

Jefferson's talents went beyond politics. He was still a young lawyer when he became interested in the architecture of classical Greece and Rome. The look of our nation's capital today reflects that interest. When Washington, D.C., was being built during the 1790s, Jefferson advised its architects and designers.

Jefferson's passion for classical styles can also be seen in his plan of Monticello, his Virginia home. For this elegant mansion, Jefferson designed storm windows, a seven-day clock, and a dumbwaiter—a small elevator that brought bottles of wine from the cellar.



Jefferson was a skilled violinist, horseman, amateur scientist, and a devoted reader, too. His book collection later became the core of the Library of Congress. After his election, Jefferson applied his many talents and ideas to the government of the United States.

## Jefferson's Philosophy

The new president had strong opinions about what kind of country the United States ought to be. But his first order of business was to calm the nation's political quarrels.

### A VOICE FROM THE PAST

Let us, then, fellow-citizens, unite with one heart and one mind. . . . Every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle. . . . We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists.

Thomas Jefferson, First Inaugural Address

#### Reading History

##### B. Summarizing

How did Thomas Jefferson try to unite the nation after he was elected?

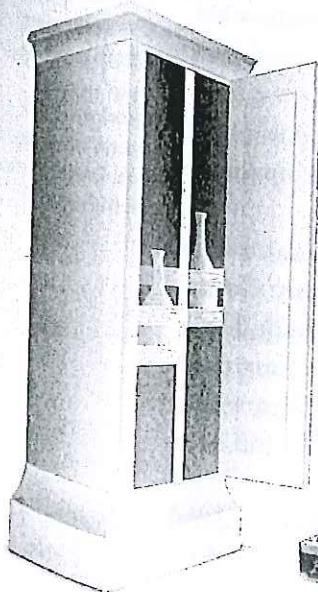
One way Jefferson tried to unite Americans was by promoting a common way of life. He wanted the United States to remain a nation of small independent farmers. Such a nation, he believed, would uphold the strong morals and democratic values that he associated with country living. He hoped that the enormous amount of available land would prevent Americans from crowding into cities, as people had in Europe.

As president, Jefferson behaved more like a gentleman farmer than a privileged politician. Instead of riding in a fancy carriage to his inauguration, Jefferson walked the two blocks from his boarding house to the Capitol. Though his chef served elegant meals, the president's guests ate at round tables so that no one could sit at the head of the table.

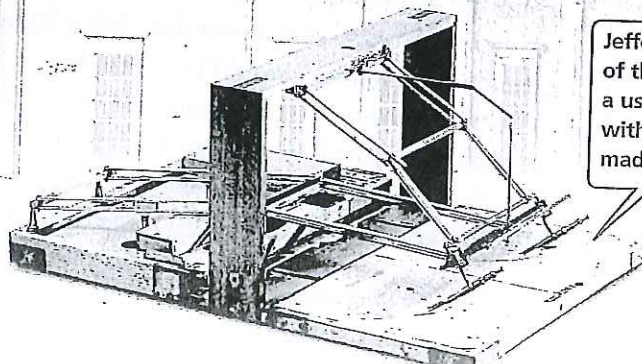
To the end, Jefferson refused to elevate himself because of his office. For his tombstone, he chose this simple epitaph: "Here was buried



### The Talented Jefferson



For his Virginia home, Jefferson designed a dumbwaiter to bring bottles from his wine cellar.



Jefferson improved the design of this early copy machine. As a user of the device wrote with one pen, a second pen made an exact copy.

Thomas Jefferson was a man of extraordinary talent. His architectural skill can be seen in the design of Monticello, shown here.



Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of American Independence, of the statute of Virginia for religious freedom, and father of the University of Virginia." Jefferson chose not to list his presidency. His belief in a modest role for the central government is reflected in the changes he made during his presidency.

## Undoing Federalist Programs

Jefferson believed that the federal government should have less power than it had had under the Federalists. During his term of office, he sought to end many Federalist programs.

At the president's urging, Congress—now controlled by Democratic-Republicans—allowed the Alien and Sedition Acts to end. Jefferson then released prisoners convicted under the acts—among them, James Callender. Congress also ended many taxes, including the unpopular whiskey tax. Because the loss of tax revenue lowered the government's income, Jefferson reduced the number of federal employees to cut costs. He also reduced the size of the military.

Jefferson next made changes to the Federalists' financial policies. Alexander Hamilton had created a system that depended on a certain amount of public debt. He believed that people who were owed money by their government would make sure the government was run properly. But Jefferson opposed public debt. He used revenues from tariffs and land sales to reduce the amount of money owed by the government.

## Marshall and the Judiciary

Though Jefferson ended many Federalist programs, he had little power over the courts. John Adams had seen to that with the **Judiciary Act of 1801**. Under this act, Adams had appointed as many Federalist judges as he could between the election of 1800 and Jefferson's inauguration in 1801. These last-minute appointments meant that the new Democratic-Republican president would face a firmly Federalist judiciary.

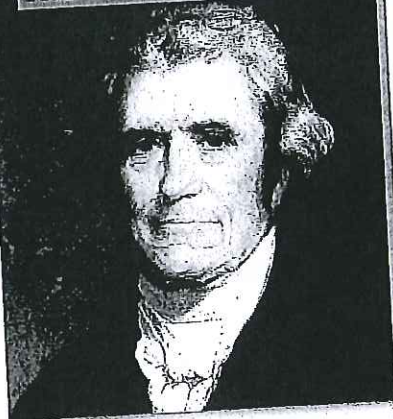
Jefferson often felt frustrated by Federalist control of the courts. Yet because judges received their appointments for life, the president could do little.

Before he left office in 1801, President Adams also appointed a new Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. He chose a 45-year-old Federalist, **John Marshall**. He guessed that Marshall would be around for a long time to check the power of the Democratic-Republicans. He was right. Marshall served as Chief Justice for over three decades. Under Marshall, the Supreme Court upheld federal authority and strengthened federal

**Background**  
In addition to founding the University of Virginia in 1819, Jefferson designed its buildings and supervised their construction.

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## AMERICA'S HISTORY MAKERS



**JOHN MARSHALL**  
1755–1835

John Marshall was born, the first of 15 children, in Virginia's backcountry. He had little formal schooling. He gained most of his education from his parents and a minister who lived with the family one year.

Even so, the lasting strength of the U.S. Constitution is partly due to Marshall's brilliant legal mind. In his long tenure as Chief Justice, John Marshall participated in more than 1,000 decisions and wrote 519 of them himself.

How does Marshall's record as Chief Justice demonstrate his decision-making abilities?

## Reading History

**C. Analyzing Causes** Why did the Federalists retain a great deal of power even after they were defeated by the Democratic-Republicans?

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courts. One of the most important decisions of the Marshall Court was *Marbury v. Madison* (1803).

## Marbury v. Madison

William Marbury was one of Adams's last-minute appointments. Adams had named him as a justice of the peace for the District of Columbia.

Marbury was supposed to be installed in his position by Secretary of State James Madison. When Madison refused to give him the job, Marbury sued. The case went to the Supreme Court, which ruled that the law under which Marbury sued was **unconstitutional**—that is, it contradicted the law of the Constitution.

Although the Court denied Marbury's claim, it did establish the principle of **judicial review**. This principle states that the Supreme Court has the final say in interpreting the Constitution. In his decision, Marshall declared, "It is emphatically the province and duty of the Judicial Department to say what the law is." If the Supreme Court decides that a law violates the Constitution, then that law cannot be put into effect.

Jefferson and Madison were angry when Marshall seized this new power for the Supreme Court, but they could hardly fight his decision. After all, he had decided *Marbury v. Madison* in their favor.

By establishing judicial review, Marshall helped to create a lasting balance among the three branches of government. The strength of this balance would be tested as the United States grew. In the next section, you will read about a period of great national growth.

**Vocabulary**  
justice of the peace: a low-level official with limited authority, including the power to perform marriages

## NOW and then

### THE SUPREME COURT TODAY

The principle of judicial review is still a major force in American society. In June 1999, the Supreme Court used this power to restrict the ability of the federal government to enforce its laws in the 50 states.

In one case, *Alden v. Maine*, the Court ruled that employees of a state government cannot sue their state even when the state violates federal labor laws—such as those that set guidelines for overtime wages.



## Section 17 Assessment

### 1. Terms & Names

Explain the significance of:

- radical
- Judiciary Act of 1801
- John Marshall
- *Marbury v. Madison*
- unconstitutional
- judicial review

### 2. Using Graphics

Use a chart like the one below to list some of the changes made by Jefferson and his party.

Changes made by Democratic-Republicans
1.

What branch of government gave Jefferson trouble?

### 3. Main Ideas

- a. How was the tie between Jefferson and Burr settled after the election of 1800?
- b. In what ways did Jefferson's talents reach beyond politics?
- c. How did the opinions of Jefferson and Hamilton regarding the public debt differ?

### 4. Critical Thinking

**Making Generalizations**  
How was Thomas Jefferson's philosophy reflected in his personal life?

#### THINK ABOUT

- how he behaved after being elected
- how he felt about his presidency later in life

## ACTIVITY OPTIONS

### TECHNOLOGY

### ART

Read more about Thomas Jefferson. Design Jefferson's Internet home page showing his inventions or create a model of a building he designed.

## Guided Reading

**A. Sequencing Events** As you read about the presidential election of 1800, fill in the boxes below with descriptions of the events leading up to the election of Thomas Jefferson.

1.	2.	3.	4.
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**B. Summarizing** As you read about the early years of Thomas Jefferson's presidency, answer the questions below.

Thomas Jefferson Takes Office
1. What were Jefferson's views on the kind of country the United States ought to be?
2. How did Jefferson simplify the federal government?
3. Why did Jefferson have little power over the judiciary?
4. What were the results of the Supreme Court's decision in <i>Marbury v. Madison</i> ?

**C. Comparing** On the back of this paper, explain how each of the following are related.  
Judiciary Act of 1801      John Marshall      judicial review